

Message Text

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TO AMCONSUL BELIZE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NY PRIOR ITY
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PBOR, MPOL, GT, BH, UK

SUBJECT: BELIZE DISPUTE: PREMIER PRICE ADAMANT
ON TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: BELIZE PREMIER PRICE CALLED ON HABIB
JULY 8 TO DISCUSS NEGOTIATIONS AND MAKE PITCH FOR U.S.
SUPPORT AT UN AND GUARANTEE OF BELIZEAN TERRITORIAL INTEG-
RITY. WE ADVISED AGAINST EARLY INTERNATIONALIZATION AND
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DISABUSED HIM OF IDEA WE MIGHT GUARANTEE BORDERS. PRICE
SHOWED NO INCLINATION TO COMPROMISE ON TERRITORIAL INTEG-
RITY. THOUGH HE WOULD WAIT UNTIL AFTER ROWLANDS VISIT TO
GUATEMALA BEFORE REINITIATING INTERNATIONALIZATION CAM-
PAIGN, HE INTENDS DO SO SHORTLY THEREAFTER. HABIB SUG-
GESTED BELIZE CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF MEDIATION TO RESOLVE
REMAINING ISSUES IF ROWLANDS VISIT TO GUATEMALA GOES WELL.

END SUMMARY.

2. PREMIER PRICE, ACCOMPANIED BY BELIZEAN AMBASSADOR TO CARICOM V. HARRISON COURTENAY, CALLED ON UNDER SECRETARY HABIB MORNING JULY 8. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN ALSO PRESENT. PRICE CLEARLY FELT LESS JUBILANT THAN BRITISH OVER NEGOTIATIONS AND RESULTING COMMUNIQUE, DISPUTING

HABIB'S UNDERSTANDING THAT TALKS WENT WELL. PRICE EMPHASIZED THAT TALKS DID NOT SEEM TO ADVANCE INDEPENDENCE AND HIS PERCEPTION THAT GUATEMALANS STIFFENED POSITION BY PROPOSING BORDER ALONG NORTH WEST TRENDING MONKEY RIVER RATHER THAN 1975 PROPOSAL OF 16 DEGREES, 30 MINUTES LATITUDE PARALLEL INLAND FROM MOUTH OF MONKEY RIVER' THIS, HE ALLEGED, WAS ITSELF SIGNIFICANT HARDENING OF 1972 PROPOSAL WHICH WAS FOR SPECIAL ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP AND INTEGRATION INTO CENTRAL AMERICAN SYSTEM.

3. PRICE MADE FIVE OBVIOUSLY PREPARED POINTS TO HABIB. FIRST: BELIZEAN POLITICAL PARTIES ARE UNITED BEHIND INDEPENDENCE WITH TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. SECOND: CONFLICT IS WIDER THAN BELIZE AND UK VERSUS GUATEMALA. COMMONWEALTH HAS NOW JOINED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES AND CANADA IS FIRMLY SUPPORTING BELIZE'S POSITION. THIRD: HE APPRECIATES WHAT U.S. IS DOING, BUT HOPES U.S. WILL BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE WITH TERRITORIAL
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INTEGRITY. FOURTH: HE WELCOMES NEW ADMINISTRATION POLICY OF MORE ATTENTION TO CARIBBEAN, ESPECIALLY ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AND HOPES BELIZE IS FULLY INCLUDED. FIFTH: BELIZE WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORT TO INTERNATIONALIZE INDEPENDENCE WITH TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SEEKS U.S. SUPPORT FOR SUCH INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CAMPAIGN. (HE DID NOT SPECIFICALLY REQUEST U.S. SUPPORT FOR UNGA RESOLUTION, BUT SAID HE DID AT SUBSEQUENT NEWS CONFERENCE.)

4. HABIB RESPONDED TO THIRD POINT (THAT U.S. BE MORE FORTHCOMING) BY NOTING THAT U.S. WILL NEVER OPPOSE PROCESS OF SELF-DETERMINATION BUT THAT PROBLEM IS HOW TO BEST ACHIEVE THAT GOAL. HE DISPUTED PRICE'S FIRMLY STATED CONTENTION THAT U.S. HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN ON SIDE OF GUATEMALA BY SAYING WE HAVE BEEN AND CONTINUE TO BE EVEN-HANDED ON DISPUTE, AND THAT BELIZE SHOULD REALIZE THAT SUCH EVEN-HANDEDNESS IS HIGHLY USEFUL TO BELIZE IN MAINTAINING OUR INFLUENCE WITH GUATEMALA. ON FOURTH POINT (ASSISTANCE) HABIB ASSURED PRICE THAT BELIZE IS FULLY INCLUDED IN OUR CARIBBEAN POLICY AND THAT WE SUPPORT INCREASED ASSISTANCE THROUGH CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND OTHER MEANS. HE NOTED THAT WE ARE VERY IMPRESSED WITH

EFFICIENT WAY BELIZE HAS PLANNED AND UTILIZED DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. ON FIFTH POINT (INTERNATIONALIZATION OF DISPUTE), HABIB SAID HE HOPED BELIZE WOULD LET ROWLANDS PLAY HAND OUT IN GUATEMALA BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER TO RE-INITIATE INTERNATIONALIZATION CAMPAIGN. HABIB ADDED HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT RUSH BACK TO INTERNATIONAL FORA WOULD AT THIS POINT BE IN BELIZE'S INTEREST, THOUGH THIS TACTIC MUST OBVIOUSLY BE KEPT IN RESERVE. PRICE RESPONDED THAT THERE IS NO NEED TO IMMEDIATELY RESUME CAMPAIGN TO

INTERNATIONALIZE, BUT IMPLIED CAMPAIGN WOULD BE RESUMED BEFORE THIS FALL'S UNGA.

5. HABIB EMPHASIZED THAT IT IS CLEARLY IN BELIZE'S
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INTEREST TO REACH NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT THAT GUATEMALANS CAN ACCEPT, SINCE THAT WOULD CATEGORICALLY END THREAT OF MILITARY INTERVENTION. HE SUGGESTED THAT PRICE KEEP MEDIATION IN MIND AS USEFUL DEVICE FOR BOTH GUATEMALA AND BELIZE TO ACHIEVE MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION WHICH NEITHER SIDE COULD AFFORD POLITICALLY TO ACCEPT UNLESS PROPOSED BY MEDIATOR. PRICE EXPRESSED RELUCTANCE TO RISK LOSING TERRITORY THROUGH MEDIATION SINCE BELIZE ALREADY HAS WIDESPREAD INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT.

6. PRICE SAID THAT HE DOES NOT SEE HOW BELIZE CAN MOVE TO INDEPENDENCE BY CONCEDING LAND. HE FEELS AN INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY IS ESSENTIAL AND THAT U.S. CAN CONTRIBUTE VERY MUCH TO THIS GUARANTEE. HABIB RESPONDED THAT SOLUTION IS TO BECOME PART OF INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM RATHER THAN SPECIFIC GUARANTEE, AND HE SHOULD REALIZE THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE IN CURRENT POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THE U.S. WOULD GIVE ANY SUCH FORMAL GUARANTEE. PRICE SAID THERE IS THE PERCEPTION BY SOME THAT THE U.S., IS NOT SAYING "HANDS OFF BELIZE" FOR RACIAL REASONS, SINCE GUATEMALA IS WHITE. HABIB CATEGORICALLY REJECTED THIS, SAYING THAT OUR POSITION IS TO KEEP SETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES OPEN AND PREVENT ARMED CONFRONTATION.

7. TODMAN ASKED BELIZEANS TO PLAY OUT HOW THEY SEE SOLUTION TO IMPASSE. AT PRICE'S REQUEST, COURTENAY RESPONDED THAT BELIZE MUST FIRST OBTAIN INDEPENDENCE, THEN WORK TOWARD GUATEMALAN DE FACTO ACCEPTANCE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY IN THE SAME WAY THAT VENEZUELA ACCEPTS GUYANA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY ON A DE FACTO BASIS. GUATEMALA HAS UNFORTUNATELY PAINTED ITSELF INTO CORNER WHICH DOES NOT PERMIT ACCEPTANCE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. HABIB
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RESPONDED THAT SINCE GUATEMALANS HAVE CATEGORICALLY STATED THEY WOULD ATTACK IF UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE GRANTED, THIS ONCE AGAIN SEEMS TO RECOMMEND MEDIATION TO LET GUATEMALANS GET THEMSELVES OUT OF CORNER. MEDIATION WOULD ALSO REMOVE LONG PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY WHICH STILL EXISTS RE VENEZUELA AND GUYANA.

8. PRICE BROUGHT UP HIS CONCERN ABOUT MIAMI HERALD ARTICLE SAYING HE WAS TARGETED BY DEA. HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT MENTION ANY OTHER BELIZEAN ALLEGEDLY TARGETED. HABIB SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER, AND LATER IN DAY SENT HIM EXPLANATORY LETTER (SEPTTEL). VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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